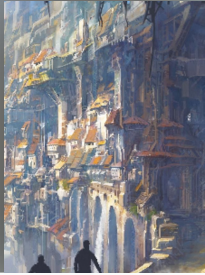




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# A Slave named Swift

[fighting](#) [giant](#) [arena](#)

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## Chapter 1 by Shadowdancer

Lord Cardan sat on his special seat, watching the fight on the area. He was down where the royals and lords sit, and because he was a regular, he had a special choice seat. Above him and all around, commoners cried drunkenly for the fight.

It was one of those small bar fights, a small ring was dug ten feet in the earth with an added four foot fence. Two doors were locked from the inside of the backstage area that lead into the ring.

The Giant, as they all called him, killed another helpless slave who lay bleeding in the corner.

The Giant was seven feet tall with huge, big thick muscles and probably weighed a ton.

Men in black dragged the dead slave out a ring door while the Giant roared up the crowd.

Cardan only smiled amusingly at the Giant roaring and leaned back in his chair.

A door opened and another slave was pushed in. The first thing that Cardan noticed was the slave's hair.

His hair was a soft yellow but it was pure, no sign of brown or changing tones. It fell straight down his back almost to the end of his shoulder blades and it whooshed back and forth as he looked around.

The next thing that Cardan noticed was the way he reacted to his present situation. He looked

around observantly and reacted to the rotten food and boos thrown at him with only slight shyness. The slave almost looked like a child.

The Giant turned around and they stood on opposite sides of the ring facing each other. The Giant was ready and trying to look intimidating. He had his arms out and feet slightly spaced and on the balls of his feet. He looked strangely unafraid.

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Cardan found himself sitting on the edge of his seat.

“Do you want to bet sir?” His servant Ned asked who was sitting next to him.

Cardan considered for a moment but waved it away. “No.”

He saw the slave take a deep breath and stare calmly at the Giant.

The gong sounded.

The Giant ran at the slave, arms tense and wide. At the last second the slave did a front roll away, landing on his feet and making the Giant smash into the wall.

The crowd laughed and the Giant stepped back growling and faced the slave again,

The slave was in a more crouched pose, ready to dodge.

With every attack the Giant made, the blond slave dodged it swiftly with experienced moves. Several times the slave drove it into the wall.

They were both sweating ten minutes in and the Giant was ten times angrier.

The Giant lunged and snatched one of the slave’s arms and held him up in the air. The slave didn’t struggle, only aimed a hard kick into the Giant’s eye. The bigger man let go, holding his hurt eye and the blond fell on to his side on the hard ground. The slave didn’t give a chance for himself to recover and was up and stepping around the ring so he was farthest away from his opponent. Only then did he rub his head and side.

The Giant wobbled half blindly through the ring and the blond danced way easily.

“Oh come on!” A crowd member cried and through a rotten tomato down at the fighters.

The slave dodged it and it hit Giant in the side of the face. Giant roared and swung his arms wildly hitting the slave in the back of the head. Giant towered over him and Blond ran though Giant’s open legs. Giant was quick and swung backwards.

Blond leaped away and was suddenly on Giants back, his arm around the thick throat.

With one arm trying to choke him, other arm was swinging and punching Giant in the face.

Giant screeched and leaned backwards and rammed Blond into the wall.

The slave’s face twisted in pain and his grip loosed and after a second loosed almost purposely.

Giant walked forward a few steps and was about to ram again when Blond swung around on Giants shoulders and pushed him with both feet on Giant’s chest.

Blond fell on his back hard but was up, a little painfully and on the other side of the arena.

The crowd was cheering loudly now for the Giant’s success. Until the slave. Slaves were worthless every way and only one of them was left.

Cardan noticed that Blond took his own head in his hands. He was killed was blue bruises and his arm was bleeding from the elbow.

Giant got up with a grunt and walked towards the slave. Blond kept to the edge of the ring and walked around it. He now looked afraid.

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The bigger man swung with his huge hand but missed by a foot. Blond only stepped back a little. Blond tripped backwards. Giant reached down and Blond quickly rolled away, and then aimed a strong kick on the side of Giant's leg.

Giant went down on his stomach with a flop. After a slow second, Blond crawled on top and slammed the back of Giant's head with his fists. He then got off shaking his right fist in pain and with an open mouthed swear.

Giant stirred and tried to get up but Blond was close enough to kick him hard in the face. Giant fell back down.

Holding his hurt wrist, the slave scooted back from the body that was laying in the middle of the ring. The crowd threw items down at the slave in boos for defecting the champion.

The slave hit the wall and huddled there, looking very scared. He soon slid down to the floor and curled up, covering his face from the objects throw down. Cardan saw him breath heavily, his chest going up and down.

It took Cardan a couple of seconds to realize what he had just seen. A fighter. A very experienced one. Not one who took the force route out, but the one that was smart and dodged and very quick. Defeating a big man without anything might not have been the best test of his abilities but he was good. Good enough to defeat an undefeatable man.

Blond had passed out. He didn't move when a tomato hit his leg or any part of his body.

The Giant moved and got up and everybody cheered as he started walking towards the unconscious man.

The very valuable unconscious man.

"Stop!" Lord Cardan cried, and everybody froze, even the Giant.

"I want the slave." He pointed to the blond man curled up in the corner.

"You want the slave?" said a man in the crowd who was dressed in expensive clothes, might be the person who was in charge of the fights.

"Yes, I want the slave. Is that a problem?" Cardan sassed.

The man shrugged hopelessly and turned to the two men in black who had entered the arena by the doors. "Get them both out. Give Giant a rest."

The man turned to the lord again. "Anything you want me to do to him?"

"Not that, but send him to the stocks. And bring him up tomorrow. If he still can't hold his fine!" Lord Cardan got up from his throne. "I want them both out. And I want it done tonight. Understood?"

"Understood." The man said.

"And if you do well you might get a tip."

"Yes sir."

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The lord walked out with Ned flanking him. Two guards were flanking the door in shiny silver body armor.

"Get my carriage." Cardan told one of them.

That one left and Ned came up next to his master.

"Sir, why would you want that slave? There are plenty of slaves on the market."

"Did you see the slave fight Ned? He was very skilled and experienced. Wasn't dumb like the others and hit Giant in the chest with his fists. Wasn't even scared until the very end."

"Yeah I guess," Ned scratched his head. "But we can always pay to train a guard..."

"Pay, Ned. This one is a slave and I don't have to pay to train him. His skills comes free and he already knows them! I save his life and he offers me loyalty in return."

"How do you know that he will do that?"

The covered carriage came up driven by two bay horses and a very upright driver. Lord Cardan and Ned stepped inside and the door was shut by one of the guards who then resumed taking post by the door.

They both sat on the back seats facing forward and the carriage started moving.

"Sorry, what was the question again?" The lord asked.

"How will you know that your new slave will offer loyalty because you saved his life?"

"He looked desperate down there after Giant was down. And also we have to offer him kindness and treat him well. I think he will be grateful."

"And if he isn't."

"Well I will do something to him."

## Chapter 2 by Aiko Momone



Some hours later, the two men in black from the arena guided the blonde boy through the main hall of the Lord's estate. Well, rather than guiding, they were almost dragging him, their arms looped around his. Immediately after the battle, the boy was taken to be washed off. He was carried into the expansive courtyard, where he was promptly stripped down and then doused with a pail of water to rinse off the clusters of rotten fruit still stuck to him. This abruptly awakened him, leaving him gasping and sputtering. One man held him still while the other

vigorously doused and scrubbed him until the stench of long-expired product dissipated, then dressed him in cleaner, nicer cloth.

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The blonde was now looking clean and healthy. He was being led to the living area, where Lord Cardan lived. The room was filled with rich and expensive pottery and golden sculptures. The marmalade orange walls, with gold running along it, were

lined with portraits of the high ranking man, all very detailed and look like they took hours. The velvety iris carpet tickled his feet, as he was wearing no shoes. He observes the ornate double doors at the end of the hall getting closer and closer. The Lord was behind them.

The men in black threw the doors open with their free hands and shoved the boy in. On the other side of the room is a red velvet couch with golden limbs. On it is none other than Lord Cardin himself, laid back and sipping a glass of red wine with Ned standing beside him.

"At last, he's here.", sighs the Lord. He sits up and leans forward to examine the boy. After about a minute of scrutinizing every detail of the boy's clothes and body, he lays back with a slight smile, looking pleased.

"He has no shoes, but he's clean!" He goes on as he reaches into his pockets and fishes out two pouches of gold pieces, each containing 50 of the currency.

"You two did well. Here's your tip. Now leave me in the boy alone." Hey tosses both of the pouches towards the men in black, who catch either one and then abruptly shut the doors behind them, leaving the boy. He stands straight and calmly makes eye contact with Lord Cardin.

"So", the Lord pipes up, "Before we begin, tell me your name."

The boy hesitates before giving him an answer.

"Swift." He responds in a calm, monotone voice. "My name is Swift."

### Chapter 3 by [BLDE\_79] LeMaironi- merry chrysler



Lord Cardan smiled. "Well, Swift. When you knocked down the Giant, in that ring, he got back up after you passed out. I stopped the fight and saved your life, because I saw skill in you. So I give you a choice. Become my personal guard, or return to the ring. If you stay with me, you'll be clothed, washed, treated and fed like a member of the family."

Swift considered his options. "And what's the catch?"

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"Your duties and your life are intertwined. You will be expected to follow the religion you practiced before, but you will be compensated for any loss of income, if necessary."

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Swift cocked his head, and got this look in his eyes. It was cold, calculating. "The extent of my 'religion' is just a supplemental moral code. Conversion should be easy as long as I keep that. I have no life or history to erase and replace with your own. I'll become your personal guard."

Lord Cardan smiled and turned to Ned. "You see, I knew he'd see the light. We'll get him into a confession room this Sabbath. But before you take him in, feed him and show him the spare quarters, Ned, I have a question to ask of Swift."

Swift's eyes rose to meet his Lord. "Yes, sir?"

"Recite to me your moral code, so that Ned can write it down and so I may potentially adopt it myself. Ned, get started."

Swift closed his eyes, as Ned's pen poised over the paper.

"One. The destruction of life, especially in the pursuit of money, is immoral."

"Two. A lie, even in self-preservation, is a lie nonetheless and immoral."

"Three. The taking of a child's innocence is a crime more egregious than murder."

"Four. Every human being is a human being. No matter what crime they committed, should they show remorse they deserve a second chance."

"Five. The law of the land is to be held in your heart unless it disagrees with the above credences."

Cardan smiled. "Perfect! I'll have everyone under my service adopt it immediately. Ned, show this man some food and his quarters."

Ned nodded. Swift was beckoned to follow the one called Ned, who took him to a hall, lined with many tables. On these tables, symbols and names were engraved. He was guided to one in particular to a spot that had nothing on it and was given a knife.

"Carve something into this spot. See more of Story Wars in your spot in this hall at mealtimes."

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Swift thought for a second, then put two cutlasses down, crossing each other. He drew flags coming off the hilt, and carved above them:

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|...\.....|7.....O-.....|-|-|...../  
i.../.....|.....o.....\,,,\,/...../..
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if periods are space and you put the lines together.

"I'm done."

Ned asked about what it meant.

"In my homeland, I was a well known and feared warrior. This--" he points to the symbols, "-- was my name. And those below it were my weapon of choice."

Ned couldn't stop himself. "What happened?"

"Your kind captured us for slaves."

Ned frowned. "Hey, Friar, you got his food?"

A portly man in white came forth with a small plate of fruits and vegetables. A flask of ale was placed second.

Swift ate and drank willingly. He could get used to this.

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